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*WORD*  
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*SEASON*

1<sup>st</sup> Series

No. 231

June 1992

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VALUING THE WORD OF GOD

ENQUIRING CHILDREN

## **THE PRACTICE OF THE TRUTH (4)**

**Philippians 3: 1-21; Hebrews 12: 1-4; 1 John 4: 15-17**

B.M.D. We have read a good deal but we can feel our way in what the Spirit may engage us with, particularly in regard to the race. This chapter puts us back on individual ground and committal. You will notice how the chapter begins: "For the rest, my brethren", which is quite characteristic of the way Paul writes his letters. I often think of the expression as like a postscript. In this case it is nearly as long as his letter! Most of us when we get a letter are inclined to read the postscript first. I only say that to bring out the importance of what this chapter may engage us with. Really, Paul, the writer, is just absorbed with one Man. If we took in the point of chapter 2 where we were this morning, our affections would be absorbed with the glory of that one Man, and in practical result from that, how can such a person rest until they reach it? And *He* is on resurrection ground; He is in glory. Therefore comes the devoted committal of each of us individually to reach Christ. It is by faith now. We are not actually there, not till our bodies are changed, which, of course, Paul covers at the end of the chapter. So in the race there are certain dangers and Paul points them out faithfully, both in the beginning - certain things to see to - and then, in verse 18, he speaks of certain as "enemies of the cross". There are dangers on the way. They may hinder us. They may divert us. We may drop out of the race if we are caught in them. Therefore we need the warnings so that we can see just the one object, the one prize, and that is that we arrive at the resurrection, one Man: "But one thing - forgetting the things behind, and stretching out to the things before, I pursue, looking towards the goal". I wondered if we could explore this a little and stimulate one another in the energy required. We do not want to fall out of the race.

W.A.M. Would you say a word as to the difference between what is eternal - I mean there will not be anything lacking: we will gain Christ eternally and our departed brethren are already with Him - but gaining Christ at the present moment.

B.M.D. Well, they have in their spirits. That lies in the area of mystery to which we alluded yesterday. They await their bodies of glory which they will receive in the resurrection. They will be raised. That is a wonderful thing, not that you could say that they lack anything personally, but there is mystery connected with that. In eternity there is nothing to be added. Their bodies are changed and, when the Lord comes, our bodies are changed and the dead in Christ are raised. There is nothing to be added to that.

W.A.M. But the present moment is very important.

B.M.D. We are still in the time of faith and dependence and this raises a sense of dangers. Some would speak of non-starters. Thank God - we look round here - thank God we are committed to the Lord, - but we need stimulation. That is why Paul brings himself forward here as a model: "let us walk in the same steps . Be imitators all together of me". Thank God for models!

H.G.H. Are some of the dangers in verse 2?

B.M.D. "See to dogs, see to evil workmen, see to the concision". It is a very concentrated warning: "See to dogs".

H.G.H. The dog turns back to his own vomit (see 2 Pet 2: 22).

B.M.D. He has no conscience. "Without are the dogs", Rev 22: 15. That is a danger - not that our consciences are reliable, save as we are selfjudged, but they are a guide; so you see to dogs. First of all we want to see that we are committed to the race. I suppose at some time in your life you have read John Bunyan; I still do. He tells us about the race and he does not fail to expose its dangers. You get clubbed to death if you do not keep on the right highway. We will not explore that any further. Then "evil workmen" - what damage they can do!

H.G.H. Are they those that are after their own glory rather than the glory of the Lord Jesus?

B.M.D. Well, we cannot judge persons' motives, but I expect what you say could be true. Evil workmen: they build with hay and stubble. Paul was a true workman. He worked in metals, did he

not? He was "a wise architect", 1 Cor 3: 10. He had the blueprints of the assembly and he worked it out, he did not deviate from the model. We have to beware of evil workmen; they may pervert. There may be some truth in them and some error in them. We need to learn how to distinguish and look in a straight line. If you have the goal before you, you see just one thing.

T.E.D. I wondered if the practice of Mephibosheth might bear on this a little. He could speak of himself as a "dead dog", yet he was available to maintain the divine standard of things when David had to go into captivity. It is like the present time. Things are in captivity, but am I maintaining the divine standard as true to Christ in His absence?

B.M.D. That is a very fine example of what we are speaking of. He was not diverted from the race even when David was in rejection. He is one of the moral greats in the Old Testament is he not, along with Urijah the Hittite? They stand out in that way and are examples for us. And then he was misunderstood, even by David. That would have been difficult for him, but what does he say? 'The king is back'. He is not diverted from his loyalty to the king. Now who of us could claim such loyalty? I could not but I would like to.

*Rem.* He said also, as to Ziba, "Let him even take all", 2 Sam 19: 30. That is like Paul here.

B.M.D. Yes, very good, but it is hard to accept being misunderstood.

W.A.M. I used to feel sorry for him but I think his was the best part.

B.M.D. I understand what you mean. He is morally great and he is at the king's table. I think he reached the goal though he was lame.

J.A.H. What you say is interesting because Mephibosheth could keep on travelling light. In the race you have to travel light. You cannot have any burdens on you. So Ziba could have all the overheads, but Mephibosheth would keep on with David, would he not?

B.M.D. Very good. Ziba really missed out, but the one who was crippled in both his feet reached there first. No one is at a

disadvantage. It is loyalty to the one Man that keeps our sights on the goal and refuses to be diverted from it.

A.P.D. Why is the goal linked with resurrection?

B.M.D. It points to what is on the other side of death. You wonder why it does not point to the Lord in His present position, but, of course, it leads to that, and His body of glory; but it is a question of getting across the Jordan, getting into a realm where death cannot invade. That is resurrection ground. We referred this morning to the forty days. It is a question of reaching Christ on new ground. We alluded to Mary of Magdala who would have retained Him as she had once known Him. Many would do that, but we no longer know Christ after the flesh, Paul says. The Lord said, "Touch me not, for I have not yet ascended", John 20: 17. She had known Him in wonderful intimacy in the days of His flesh. He is really saying, Know me now in a new way, in a new position where the shadow of death can never fall. Is that not the incentive for us to reach Him on resurrection ground? It is attraction; it is love or the Person: when you see the ark, go after it.

H.G.H. But we are constantly reminded of what the flesh is and we want to get rid of it. We would be rid of it on resurrection ground. In resurrection we would not have the flesh any more.

B.M.D. It is left behind. That has to be maintained. There is no question but that the Lord intends that the close of the dispensation should be marked by what is spiritual. How do we become spiritual?

H.G.H. In dependence. I would not claim to be spiritual but one thing I am doing is asking to be spiritual. We will not do it without the desire, but we need deliverance in its full aspect.

B.M.D. It is by thorough self-judgment that we become spiritual. We have no confidence in the flesh.

*Ques.* Is that guide in verse 3 - "For we are the circumcision"? It is through circumcision that we arrive at this.

B.M.D. The flesh is cut off. The concision is mixture, perhaps the greatest danger - part way, compromise. Beware of that danger!

"For we are the circumcision". It had been neglected apparently in the wilderness. Joshua had to see to it at Gilgal. It was a painful matter. They had to do it again and the reproach of Egypt was rolled off. Now this is a constant thing; it must not be neglected. If you are going to reach heavenly ground and the enjoyment of eternal life, there is to be no evidence of the reproach of Egypt. Its ways and its fashions and all the things that connect with the world would be a reproach to those walking in the light and truth of the assembly.

H.G.H. Circumcision at Gilgal was collective. It is heavenly ground, as you say. If you are going to enjoy eternal life you need your brethren; the Corinthians were not in the good of circumcision collectively.

B.M.D. Well, they had to face it, I suppose, in the way they dealt with evil in their midst. The leaven had to be cast out. The Galatians had been running well; what stopped them? The concision. Judaism crept in again.

H.G.H. Yes, the mind of man at work.

B.M.D. That is right.

W.A.M. I think it would be good if we heard from some of the brethren that have not been speaking, some of our younger brethren.

B.M.D. That is fine. I have been looking for that for a long while. What do you do about it?

W.A.M. Make room for them: I think they are all free to speak, even just to ask a question.

B.M.D. They can do more than that; they can tell us something too.

*Ques.* Can you open up what you mean by 'spiritual'? We each have a certain personality. What do we lose? What do we get rid of? Some personalities are more quiet, some are more loud.

B.M.D. I can follow you exactly. Where do you get that personality from? You have your own personal links with Christ, have you not? They are not the same as mine or those of anybody else. We have

our own secret impress of Christ: that develops by the Spirit into your own personality. That is what will go through into eternity. That is how we will know one another in eternity. It will not be the natural. There is no resuming of natural links. Does that help you at all?

*Rem.* Yes, that is good. Sometimes I think it is a sort of outward thing. I guess being spiritual is being sensitive to the Spirit and allowing Him to affect you in all you do.

B.M.D. Making room for Him. Therefore you find in your experience that the weights you do not need to have you can cast off. In a race you cannot be loaded down with leaden weights all round you, can you?

H.G.H. Earlier you said that in order to be spiritual we have to be in self-judgment. There is that in the personality of each of us that can be offensive and which we need to have a judgment of. Every time it shows its face, judge it! Condemn it!

B.M.D. Each of us knows the thing that hinders us. It might not be the same with me as it is with you, but you know very well in your own conscience what it is that hinders you. It might be light reading.

H.G.H. By the Spirit's help.

B.M.D. By the Spirit's help you say that is not going to help me and you say 'No' to it.

H.G.H. But the Spirit helps us to come to a right judgment of what we are by nature.

B.M.D. "The Spirit joins also its help to our weakness", Rom 8: 26. He is the greatest comfort, but we need to be definite and say 'No' to certain things; like Joseph who said "How should I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Gen 39: 9. Let us be definite in our judgment, and the Spirit is there to help us. Do not toy with these things! Do not toy with the world! Do you remember what that beloved sister Lady Powerscourt said years ago? 'Put away your toys; the world is in flames'. Well, if our dear sister were with us today, what would she be saying? We should be saying, should we not, 'Put away your toys'? That does not mean we are unnatural,

does it? When the little children are playing with their toys, you like to join them; that is all right.

H.G.H. She had a judgment of these toys and she did not carry on with them. She made room for the Lord and His things.

B.M.D. It does not mean I am unnatural. A spiritual person would enjoy the natural relationship far more than anybody else. Is that right?

*Rem.* Say more as to that.

B.M.D. Well, what is of nature is of God. It has largely been corrupted through sin. If we lead a life of piety and purity, we enjoy the relationships of nature as God intended them.

*Ques.* Do we need to see that this is how we should be? I get occupied with the outward things which I might think are spiritual and that is no help, is it? It is, as you say, just allowing the Spirit to work on your conscience and follow the unction.

B.M.D. That is right. You come into a wonderful sphere of liberty. It is hard to explain. You have to find it for yourself. To explain it might spoil it.

W.A.M. The only thing that goes through is our identity, is it not?

B.M.D. Our spiritual identities. That is right.

W.A.M. "I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live, *I*, but Christ lives in me", Gal 2: 20.

B.M.D. That "I" stands by itself.

W.A.M. That is what we were taught: other things have to go. Everything else we receive sovereignly from divine Persons.

J.A.H. Does dealing with the flesh have its reward in that we become worshippers? "We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God". It is like Jacob; he had problems to deal with but, as he went through these experiences, he became a worshipper.

B.M.D. His walk was over and he finished leaning on his staff. He did not begin like that, did he? He only gave a tenth to start with;

then he made a bargain. He is a lesson book for all of us - begin even with a tenth but he finished with ten tenths, fully committed, a worshipper. I think we can encourage one another and our younger brethren to be committed to the race. Be absorbed with this one Man Jesus Christ.

A.P.D. It is important that Christ becomes supreme in our affections. Paul was able to count all things to be loss "on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord". We cannot live in a vacuum, can we? We must have some object to absorb our interest.

B.M.D. I am glad you say that. Something has to go because something greater is emerging into your life. "On account of whom I have suffered the loss of all, and count them to be filth", or dung: what Christ must have meant to that beloved servant!

W.A.M. These were not the bad features of the flesh; they might even be called the good features.

B.M.D. They might in a sense be legitimate and yet he says, they are hindering me in the race. Some of the things would be quite legitimate.

W.A.M. "In the law, found blameless".

B.M.D. Well, you could not fault him as to the law, but it did not help him in the race. It had to go.

*Ques.* Being practical, what would help me to turn away from the books of this world would be to get a taste for the spiritual ministry that the Lord is giving to us. Is it not a very practical thing that it does not happen all of a sudden? Our taste does not change all of a sudden.

B.M.D. It is good to bring in that practical side; one of the most subtle things the enemy uses is light reading. I felt that in my youth as a very real snare and found it was robbing me by destroying a taste for spiritual things. I would urge our beloved younger brethren to say No to that; it will displace the room Christ is seeking in your affections. The enemy has introduced other things into the world; TV

and the video can become a snare that destroys our taste and maybe will divert us from the race. We may become fall-outs and not finish the race. Is that a bit severe?

*Rem.* I think that is helpful but we need to develop a taste for what is spiritual.

B.M.D. How do we do that?

W.A.M. "And no one having drunk old wine straightway wishes for new, for he says, The old is better", Luke 5: 39. That is natural with us. As you say, we have to develop a taste and, as we persevere, we find we get a taste.

*Rem.* We begin to enjoy it, do we not?

W.A.M. That is right. I remember when I used to find certain ministry very dry, but finally I began to see something in it that really affected me.

B.M.D. I could be beside you in that. What you do find is that the more you read the more you want to read. "Give thyself to reading", 1 Tim 4: 13: that was Paul's word to Timothy. Give yourself to it! Make time for it! You hear people say there is no time for it, but however busy you are, you will do the things you want to do. If your tastes are there, you will do the things you want to do.

J.N.C. Paul speaks of those that "have their senses exercised for distinguishing both good and evil", Heb 5: 14. The good can be chosen.

B.M.D. So exercise our spiritual sensibilities.

J.N.C. It says also "on account of habit". That would require self-judgment, would it not?

B.M.D. A right habit very much helps on the practical side. Set time aside for reading and for prayer. I should put prayer first perhaps. Order your life methodically. It is piety. Piety is not spirituality, but I question if we would be spiritual if we are not pious. Many may rest on their piety and think that is Christianity. Let us get our taste into

what eternal life is. Get a taste of eternal life and we will not be content with our lives. Is it all right to say that?

J.N.C. That is right: "if indeed ye have tasted that the Lord is good", 1 Pet 2: 3.

B.M.D. There is something that can come into a meeting - in a sense you cannot describe it. It is a collective experience of something when the Lord comes into a matter and you say, That is it. We have had it in some measure, I think we could say simply and humbly. Let us get our taste for that! You would not miss a meeting. Now, we must get to work here and get some more contributions. I will not go round the circle like we used to, but I would like to ask what you are thinking about.

M.S. Do you think that Ruth is a very fine example? She thought everything had failed and was lost for ever but then she gains a wealthy man.

B.M.D. Yes. Well, I think Paul is the model here. Keep your eye on the model - but there are models among the brethren. Thank God for fathers. If there were not many of them at Corinth - "not many fathers" (1 Cor 4: 15), plenty of instructors; ten thousand of them. Think of ten thousand instructors in your local meeting! What sort of hall would they have? "Not many fathers". I think Paul brings out the spirit of a father here. We did not touch it earlier; being "poured out as a libation on the sacrifice" (chap 2: 17) was the depth of the feelings of a father.

D.F.H. Can you enlarge on verses 13 and 14: "stretching out to the things before, I pursue, looking towards the goal, for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus"? I was thinking of what was said earlier about the goal in resurrection.

B.M.D. Well, he says, "/ do not count to have got possession myself; but one thing - forgetting the things behind". They can hamper us. We can be over-occupied with the things that are behind. We have to look forward and onward. The way is upward still. If you are occupied with the things behind, you get depressed.

D.F.H. I value what you said about having a judgment of past history but not lingering over it

B.M.D. Not lingering over it: exactly. You are pressing on. I seem to remember hearing once that Mr Wigram said to Mr Darby in a time of assembly crisis, 'I am trying to look up', and Mr Darby said, 'I am not looking down'. There is something in that: are not over-occupied with what could overwhelm you.

W.A.M. That is Revelation after chapter 3: they are up, looking down.

D.F.H. That is a practical thing. If you are driving in stormy weather, you do not notice anything that is around; you keep your eye on a certain object all the time and forget about the trucks and the lights and so on. I suppose in sailing a ship it is the same thing.

B.M.D. That is right. You have to keep your eye forward. That is what the ploughman had to do when he set out his furrow. If he looked apart from the object at the end he had a crooked furrow. That is the principle, is it not? Let us run a straight course that is leading directly to where Christ is. We did not finish your enquiry about "stretching out to the things before, I pursue; looking towards the goal, for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. What a goal that is! I suppose it is new creation, is that right?"

A.P.D. I am interested in what you say; I wondered if it was sonship, but you say some more.

B.M.D. Well, that is the same thing: that belongs to new creation. What a wonderful scene is ahead of us: sonship, new creation, the assembly! And they all go through collaterally into eternity. What a goal to reach! It is by faith now and presently it will be an actuality.

H.G.H. But can we define it? Did not the apostle Paul here have a goal that in one sense cannot be defined? The thing is he was pressing on at all times; no matter how far he had reached he was still pressing on.

B.M.D. That is right; you could not stop him. He had one Man before him; everything is in Christ Jesus:

'In Christ Jesus - new creation'. (Hymn 37)

So you can tell how tenderly he would say, Do not be otherwise minded. The heart of Paul is coming out here: "and if ye are any otherwise minded, this also God shall reveal to you". I think there should be a tenderness developing that would encourage and attract others in the race. While it is individual, you are watching others. Everyone is going to reach the goal; every one is going to get the prize.

*Rem.* It speaks about the "same steps". We had earlier the "same conflict" (chap 1: 27,30) and then the "same thing" (chap 2: 2) but now it is the "same steps".

B.M.D. Yes, so you may find someone walking shoulder to shoulder with you, running together; but essentially this is individual. Then we get another set of warnings here: "fix your eyes on those walking thus as you have us for a model", but then "for many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction", and then they are described.

*Rem.* I suppose the weeping would be a test to us. The apostle Paul would go to a locality and have a judgment of it and then he would be before God as to it, would he not, in some cases weeping, at other times rejoicing. He could rejoice with the Philippians, could he not?

B.M.D. I think we could have a few more of that kind of tears. How are the brethren getting on?

*Rem.* In some cases that is all you can do.

B.M.D. It may be the most effective way of meeting it.

*Rem.* That is right.

B.M.D. Intensity of feeling and affection would lie behind those tears. There is a great need for assembly tears.

*Ques.* Would that be part of the sufferings that Paul had to go through to make up for others?

B.M.D. Yes, and yet he is not delaying the race. Probably the most effective way you can help others is to go on yourself.

W.A.M. Why does he look so seriously on earthly things? I mean in the Old Testament they were rightly engaged with earthly things, but what is heavenly has come in.

B.M.D. No doubt it has a prophetic edge to our very times, more materialism than ever - "who mind earthly things"; their mind is on earthly things. If I am absorbed with them, they become a hampering influence on the race.

*Rem.* These would be the old wine that spoils our taste for the new. You find many things that in themselves might be legitimate, but you say to yourself, Is this going to help me to acquire a taste for the new wine?

B.M.D. Well, earthly things held rightly, if we can be entrusted with them, are useful in the testimony. God has used such, but it is the love of them that is the trouble. Then there is this beautiful touch as to our commonwealth having its existence in the heavens. That is where we belong; we do not belong to this world. Our associations of life are somewhere else. That would help us to hold earthly things in a balanced way.

W.A.M. And awaiting the Saviour - you are looking for Him.

B.M.D. Yes, every day looking for the Saviour: "we await the Lord Jesus Christ".

J.R.B. I was just thinking for the young people that what has been proceeding here yesterday and today is really what we are enjoying as belonging to this commonwealth. It is what we enjoy in common in the inheritance.

B.M.D. This is the wealth to go in for. It would be over against the wealth of earthly things: it is a "commonwealth"; there is a mutuality of affection developing among those walking in and loving the truth. Then "who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to his body of glory".

J.N.C. That is an affecting touch, is it not, as to how the Lord is presented here? He is presented in His full title - Lord Jesus Christ - but then what is added is "as Saviour". We have known Him as the Saviour of our souls; now, Paul says, He is going to be the Saviour of the body. We can have body salvation.

B.M.D. Yes, and He has directly to do with our bodies. It would seem that the Spirit has directly to do with the change of our bodies.

J.N.C. Yes, that is also very moving because it seems in that scripture (Rom 8: 11) that the Father is moved by the Spirit: "on account of his Spirit which dwells in you".

B.M.D. Yes, it seems He has to do with the change of our bodies. The Lord directly would have to do with the raising of the sleeping ones. As we think of the body of humiliation we can call on the Lord as the Saviour of the body. In weakness, in suffering, in sickness, we call on the Lord as Saviour of the body. It is a great comfort.

W.A.M. And yet our bodies are "the temple of the Holy Spirit", 1 Cor 6: 19.

B.M.D. Yes, exactly. Again we are in an area of mystery. We cannot exactly explain it, but you prove it in the way of life.

E.F.C. So there will be tremendous power exercised at the time of the rapture. I was going to ask you about verse 14: "the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus". Would that not wait for the rapture too as well as what we presently enjoy, as was said earlier, in sonship and all that is in our possession now? "The calling on high of God in Christ Jesus" seems to be a tremendous instrumental matter. It would link with what will take place at the rapture, would you think?

B.M.D. That is very interesting, linking it with the idea of the calling on high, because He will call out the sleeping saints, will He not? So in a sense it synchronises. Is that what you were thinking?

E.F.C. Yes, we used to think of it as our high calling - well, that is what we have in sonship and new creation, as you were saying - but it reads "calling on high". I wondered why it was rendered that way.

B.M.D. I think it is a very useful suggestion. It really synchronises with the moment of the rapture and then things will be absolutely complete.

E.F.C. So that is the last verse of this chapter: "according to the working of the power which he has even to subdue all things to himself". We see the exercise of that power in Revelation, do we not?

B.M.D. Exactly, and it will be seen in the resurrection. In a way it was anticipated when the bodies of some of the saints arose after the Lord arose. There was an evidence of power and, of course, supremely so in our blessed Lord Himself: "the surpassing greatness of his power ... which he wrought in the Christ in raising him from among the dead", Eph 1: 19,20. Think of that: from among the millions of the dead, He was selected; one blessed Person, one Man, was raised from among the dead. Think of the folly of man questioning the resurrection, saying it is a myth.

W.A.M. It speaks of "the working of his power", Eph 3: 7: I suppose that power is going to work in the millennium subduing every man.

B.M.D. Well, you cannot limit that power: "even to subdue all things to himself". Everything will be subjugated to the one Man.

*Rem.* We had this morning "what we shall be has not yet been manifested", 1 John 3: 2. I suppose "conformity to his body of glory" is the greatest manifestation that we do have. Is that right?

B.M.D. It would appear that His body of glory is the final matter, not that we can limit a divine Person, and it would appear there could be a change between His body of glory and the body in which He appeared in the forty days. Whether there would be any marks of His suffering in His body of glory would be a question.

A.P.D. One of the great triumphs of God is that these bodies are changed. It is not exactly that we are given new ones, is it?

B.M.D. Well, what do you think about that?

A.P.D. I thought it was a triumph of divine grace, a triumph of divine power, that these bodies of humiliation will be changed. The

Authorised Version reads 'vile bodies' which is hardly the thought. It is not a moral thought here exactly, but what we are in weakness, "humiliation". They will be changed; they will be glorious.

B.M.D. Yes, it is more than "put on immortality", 1 Cor 15: 54. It would be a final condition. Yet there is mystery about it now. How did Moses appear on the mount? You have to leave that. In what bodies did those who arose from the tombs appear? It is unthinkable they would return there. They would be somewhere. It is mystery.

W.A.M. It is the same when Samuel appeared to Saul.

B.M.D. Well, you have to leave that - it is mystery. There was such a condition; you have to leave that. We are not yet in a condition to understand these things and I would think it is better not to intrude into areas that are beyond us.

W.A.M. As to our departed brethren, we do not know what has been happening. We know they are with the Lord.

B.M.D. We have to leave that. It is "the working of the power which he has even to subdue all things to himself". Now that should make us restful. He will do that. The passage we read in Hebrews just supports what we were saying as to the race. We have "so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, laying aside every weight" - perhaps we have touched that - "which so easily entangles us, run with endurance the race that lies before us, looking stedfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith". That would be a stimulation, would it not, to continue stedfastly in the race?

J.R.B . I have often thought about this verse. I suppose primarily it has in mind those who have been delineated in the preceding chapter, but we are not without witnesses currently. You cannot help but be affected by what is in expression in the lives of many of the dear brethren.

B.M.D. I am sure of that.

J.R.B. We are surrounded by them.

B.M.D. So we need one another. We value one another. You go to the elderly brethren the elderly sisters. We are bound together in this race. And then the confession in John's epistle where we read: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God". What is this confession? I link it with this way of life, this commonwealth. It must express itself by way of a confession. It is a way of life.

E.F.C. Would you say the life of God here on earth enjoyed by persons?

B.M.D. God has been expressed, has He not? This is the family setting in John's writings and He would be reflected and represented in His children, children of God. Is that how you understand it?

E.F.C. I think so. At one time we were "estranged from the life of God", but now having the liberty of sonship and the gift of the Spirit and the redemptive work of Christ all in our possession, we might say on the principle of faith, we are set up to live here for God.

B.M.D. Yes, and express God in witness represent Him here. Is that not the idea, as a witness?

W.A.M. And you overcome the world, do you not?

B.M.D. Exactly.

W.A.M. It says, "who is he that gets the victory over the world?", 1 John 5: 5.

B.M.D. Yes, it is your faith that has overcome the world.

A.P.D. How do you understand what it says: "God abides in him and he in God"?

B.M.D. I would link that with the way the Lord prays in John 17. We could just allude to that in verse 23: "I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me". Do you see any connection?

A.P.D. God abides in us: that would be in our affections.

B.M.D. Surely, that is how He would be there, and His very nature is coming out there. It says "God is love" - that is His nature - "and he that abides in love abides in God, and God in him".

E.F.C. Would it refer back to verse 13 where it says, "Hereby we know that we abide in him and he in us, that he has given to us of his Spirit"? Does God not dwell in us by the Spirit?

B.M.D. That brings out again the glory of the Person of the Spirit; God is dwelling Spirit-wise in the .saints.

W.A.M. Is it a question of our abiding in God, so it is the home of love really.

B.M.D. That is what it is, getting to the very centre of things, the very origin of where love is. No one made God love: it is what He is. Were you going to say more?

A.P.D. I was going to ask, if it would not be a diversion, do you understand that the Spirit will indwell the assembly eternally?

B.M.D. Surely I would say that, would you not?

A.P.D. Yes, I would.

B.M.D. When would He leave? You could say that for every individual Christian too: He does not leave.

A .P.D. Does that not have to do with the distinctive character of the family, the assembly, as in a sense the nearest to Deity of any family?

B.M.D. Because she is indwelt by a divine Person. She is creature, but she is indwelt by a divine Person. So individually our link with the Lord is by the Spirit: "But he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit", 1 Cor 6: 17. It is like the germ of union, really, in the same way as Romans 7 is the germ of union - married to another. We are perhaps making the subject a bit wide, but you can see the essential meaning of these things in leading us to one conclusion, one end, that is what the assembly is for Christ, and the glory of God is there. Well, we can think of these things. We have touched things that are

beyond our depth - and they all are in any case - but the Spirit of God is here and He will lead us into the great things of God.

**Additional initials**

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# VALUING THE WORD OF GOD

T.E.Druckenmiller

**1.Sarnuel 3: 1.-14.; Matthew 4: 3,4; 2 Peter 1: 16-20; Revelation 3: 20-22;  
John 18: 37**

I desire, beloved brethren, to say a word as to our appreciation of the word of God. One has been affected in the last week or two, and I believe confirmed through these times together, as to an increased need to value the word of God – the Holy Scriptures, the precious book we hold in our hand, the precious book that I think most (if not all) of us here have come to love and to cherish; God revealing His mind lo men. I believe we would have a longing to get a fresh impression that would strengthen our desire to value the word of God, to value the communications that God is desirous of making to every one of us individually, communicating His mind to men, with a view to there being with you and me, a preparedness to be here for God amid the confusion of the state of things that is abroad in what the beloved apostle speaks of as a "great house", 2 Tim 2: 20.

One refers to Samuel because of the expression "the word of Jehovah was rare in those days". If we remember the first reading, reference was made to this scripture and the value of God speaking to one so young. I believe the Lord means to leave a fresh impression on our hearts that He would speak to every one of us, to you and to me. His appeal in speaking to us is that He would love to communicate something; to let you know how much His love and interest is, in you and, how much He wants you to be for Him in the world where He has been rejected. We are in the place "which is called ..., Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified", Rev 11: 8. We are in the sphere where Christ has died and yet He would appeal to your heart and to mine afresh tonight to be amongst His called ones. He would call you by your name. That is the precious touch we get here in this Old Testament scripture – God's appeal to one young man, Samuel. It says "the word of Jehovah

was rare in those days". Publicly, it is almost like the present time: rare. Oh, but dear, beloved brethren, we have had a sense that the word of God is being spoken and we have been for these two days in an area where it is appreciated. Thank God for that. I look around all this company, I think back over years of precious times enjoyed together, persons here that we have known, and valued from our youth, The Lord is helping us; we feel the chequered way we have all come, and yet the Lord would steady and strengthen us, through His word. Many an exercise is upon us here; many a sorrow and broken heart is among us. Think of all that has transpired in the testimony and yet the Lord would confirm us and strengthen our faith to go on as linked with the precious glad tidings that have been before us. They bring us into the light and glory of the way that Christ has gone in suffering love to secure us each individually and to set us together in relation to what is collective as next His heart, the precious assembly that He is going to present to Himself "glorious, having no spot, or wrinkle, or any of such things", Eph 5: 27.

But He would appeal to us on this individual side: Samuel! Think of Samuel being called! Think of what lay behind his being here - a mother's heart, the feeling of someone who was concerned about God's presence in Israel. The lamp had just about gone out. We get that here: "the lamp of God had not yet gone out", but here was Samuel, and Jehovah called to him, and he said, Here am I. Well, the Lord calls you. Do you say, Here am I? I believe the Lord would call afresh to each of us tonight. Would we say, Here am I? Are we ready, available to Him? I believe we sometimes come to realise there is more in it than desire of heart, and yet we would tonight, I think, afresh be prepared to say, Here am I. Let us be ready, dear brethren, to take things up in view of the testimony concluding in brightness. Samuel was one who maintained the divine standard of things in a dark day. That is what we are in, beloved brethren. We are in a dark day, in public ruin, church breakdown, and yet the divine light of the glory is shining. The lamp of God had almost gone out, but Samuel is being called. It says in

verse 6: "And Jehovah called again, Samuel! And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I"; then in verse 7: "Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither had the word of Jehovah yet been revealed to him". Let us just dwell on this thought of the word of God. Has it been revealed to you? Do you value the precious Scriptures? Do you value divine communications, what God is prepared to say to you and what He is prepared to say to me? The great danger is the intrusion of the mind of man. We have been helped, but need to be helped more, to allow the word of God to form our minds to form our thinking, to direct us in relation to what is of God in the midst of the day of confusion in which we are.

"Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, neither had the word of Jehovah yet been revealed to him". There may be someone here who has come to these meetings not yet knowing the word of Jehovah. May they get a touch from the Lord in which they feel a sense of the Lord speaking to their heart. There is a great danger, dear brethren, of doing our own thing, whatever that might be - it might be different with you from what it is with me - but what we need is the word of the Lord bearing on every issue in our lives. There is a great need to understand the family setting and to fill our place in it - father, mother, son or daughter, parents in relation to children, children in relation to parents - to fill out your place in the local meeting and to be content and to move in it as under the ordering of God in our circumstances. As we do so we will prove the blessing, we will prove the joy, we will prove the rejoicing that we have had in the scriptures in Philippians. You do not get through to the rejoicing apart from understanding the suffering side of things. I was thinking of a verse in Jeremiah, another man in the Old Testament. He says, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them, and thy words were unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart", chap 15: 16. There is a man that valued the word of God in a dark day, when Israel was about to be carried captive, a man who suffered, suffered as the word of God came to him, suffered as he spoke the word of God, and yet he was prepared to seek the word of God and to find it. Samuel did not yet know Jehovah. Jeremiah knew God

and he knew the value of the word of God. I believe, dear brethren, the Lord would speak to our hearts and cause us to desire to value the word of God.

So here it says, "And Jehovah called again the third time, Samuel!" Maybe some the Lord has called a third time. Think of it! You may not have answered the first time. Many of us we have not answered the second, maybe not even the third time. But then in verse 10: "And Jehovah came, and stood, and called as at the other times, Samuel, Samuel!" Oh, that is a precious touch! Remember that the Lord said to Saul of Tarsus, "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?", Acts 9: 4. Wonderful the way the Lord would single us out and call us to bring us into blessing, to bring us into the joy and rejoicing of the heavenly company. Yes, sorrows we may prove as we go through the way, and may the Lord help us in them! I am sure He will. I am sure we will find, as we place our exercises more in the presence of the Lord, that He will minister to our hearts through His word. He will come in and speak to our hearts. That is what Samuel found. How near the Lord would come! "We will come to him", John 14: 23. We were thinking of the Father coming and speaking, the Lord coming and speaking and the Spirit coming and speaking, but I would like to emphasise the import of the Lord's desire to come to you and to find a ready response as He did from Samuel.

One would just pass on to what we read in Matthew because one of the great exercises of heart that we have is the tremendous power that Satan has to divert us from the truth, and the power that he has wielded right from the beginning, casting doubt into the heart of Eve as to the word of God: "Is it even so, that God has said ...?" (Gen 3: 1) - did He really mean it this way? Oh, the devil is very crafty. Let us not minimise his effort to dissuade any one of us from the truth, no matter how young or old. We referred to Josiah yesterday, the king who began well, began as a youth, eight years old; he did what was right in the sight of Jehovah, and yet he did not finish well. Something persuaded him from the truth. The enemy's

determined effort is to turn any one of us from the pathway of faith, the pathway of obedience to the will of God.

One read from this section because of the way the Lord met the power of the enemy through reference to the word of God. The devil said, "If thou be Son of God, speak that these stones may become loaves of bread. But he answering said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which goes out through God's mouth". Do we live by the word of God? Do we value it the way we should? Do we read it day by day? Do we find that we need the word of God? One would like to make it attractive to our hearts, that we need to live by the word of God. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which goes out through God's mouth". In each of these three temptations the reference is back to Moses' book of Deuteronomy. In verse 4 Jesus said "It is written"; in verse 7: "It is again written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God", and again in verse 10: "Get thee away, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt do homage to the Lord thy God and him alone shalt thou serve". The Lord met the power of the enemy with the word of God. You and I need, beloved brethren, to cultivate more intimacy with the precious word. I believe that would be by our links with the Holy Spirit, in our reading, our meditation, our prayer as to the word of God, and being instructed and taught divinely. May the Lord interest us afresh today to value the word of God!

So the Lord refers here to what Moses said in Deuteronomy, that great section of Scripture. It was to those two on the way to Emmaus with exercise that the Lord spoke to them about Moses and the prophets. Then in the company collectively He opened their understanding to understand the Scriptures - Moses, the Psalms, and the prophets. These sections of Scripture speak of Christ: "they bear witness concerning me", John 5: 39. May the Lord increase our interest to find Christ in the Scriptures. Look through the word of God, see the way the Lord shines out! Oh may the Lord interest our hearts increasingly to value the mind of God revealed!

One would now turn to the further three passages. We had last evening the touch as to the voice of the Lord. It would do us well to

speaking further about the voice. That God has conveyed His word in divine speaking is something we should greatly value. I turned to Peter because of the reference to the Father's voice: "For he received from God the Father honour and glory, such a voice being uttered to him by the excellent glory: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight". Think of the Father's delight in Jesus to proclaim Him from the glory to those three who were "eyewitnesses of his majesty". We were speaking of this the other day and a brother asked why does it not say, 'Hear Him' in this section? It has occurred to me that what follows is of import. It refers to "the prophetic word made surer". Peter brings in the value of the Spirit speaking, and the prophetic word as being that in which divine Persons would communicate to us throughout this present dispensation. We would always go back to the gospels and value that word, "Hear him". One would not for a moment say we should not, but the emphasis in what follows is on "the prophetic word made surer". I venture to suggest that in our local settings we should value more the prophetic word. That precious occasion - some localities have it weekly, some monthly - but there is something of peculiar value in making way for the prophetic word. I believe that that occasion provides the Spirit opportunity to speak to the local assembly. I mention that, feeling the experience of it, the exercise that it raises as we look for a fresh touch from the Lord. We should see what we can do in view of making opportunity for divine speaking. And so it says, "And we have the prophetic word made surer, to which ye do well taking heed (as to a lamp shining in an obscure place)" - It may be that we are in an obscure place! - "until the day dawn and the morning star arise in your hearts. The dawn is about to break. We said yesterday the fourth watch, the star having already risen. Has it risen in your heart and mind? Is there something that obscures the shining? Have clouds dimmed my sight? Oh, let the Lord speak to our hearts! Let us see the rising of the star and be increasingly ready to meet the Lord, the day-star: "until the day dawn and the morning star arise in your hearts; knowing this first, that the scope of no prophecy of scripture is had from its own particular interpretation, for prophecy was not ever

uttered by the will of man, but holy men of God spake under the power of the Holy Spirit". Think of the place the speaking of the Spirit is to have in the local assembly. Think of 1 Corinthians 12: "For to one, by the Spirit, is given the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit" (v 8). Let us, beloved brethren, make way for divine speaking. If we want to stay out of the confused state of things abroad we need more restfulness to work things through in the presence of divine Persons, increased communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I think the touch that came in at the end of the reading should be followed up more by us, the Lord's communication to the Father in John 17 having an appeal. He says "Sanctify them by the truth; thy word is truth" (v 17). We will come to that in the last scripture, the great need for the truth, and to allow it to govern our thinking and our walk and our bearing in the present state of things, but we will never arrive at the truth if the mind of man intrudes into our thinking, in our approach to things. Let the Lord help us to acknowledge wherein in the past we have digressed and we have allowed something of man's mind to warp our view and to lead us astray. Oh, we need to be quickened in our pace in this race and tread with lighter step in our pathway here.

Then I would like to go on to the Lord's voice in Revelation. It is interesting in these scriptures that there is the Father's voice, and then the Spirit's, and here the Lord's voice, and then the word at the end of the chapter: "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies". I believe it shows the intimacy there is between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Think of divine Persons wanting to make their abode with you and with me. You know that verse, "Jesus answered and said to him, If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him", John 14: 23. That is the choicest of what is available to you and to me at the present time. If we are prepared to hear His voice and we love Him and we love His word, we shall be just waiting for the Father to come to us, and the Son, and I believe They would come, and coupled with that would be

the presence of the Spirit. You can hardly think of it otherwise, the value of the three Persons of the Godhead and you as an individual and myself, able to communicate in love's way in the intimacy of relationship with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Oh, think of what is available to every believer in Jesus! We should strengthen one another; we should love our brethren in the whole of Christendom. In reading in books of ministry, two or three times recently I have seen it - 'our Roman Catholic brethren' or 'our brethren in the systems'. We have been too much in a shell, I believe. We need to be outgoing in our affections to-all who are part of the body. May the Lord help us to that end!

Then we come to this reference to Laodicea, a very solemn section of Scripture, that such should be increased with goods and have need of nothing, persons who outwardly take the place of Christians. Do we not know something of it? We became like this, beloved brethren - let us be honest - and yet the Lord, in faithful love, stood at our door and knocked. We did not open the first time; did not open the second time; maybe not even the third time. In love and in grace He continued to knock. "I rebuke and discipline as many as I love". Oh, beloved brother, beloved sister, the Lord loves you - one would convey that to everyone here, the love of the Christ to you - and maybe we are not fully answering to His love. The precious Supper in the morning - oh, think of the words of Jesus, Remember Me! Think of the word in that hymn 430:

"My body - giv'n," Thou saidst, O Lord,  
"My blood - poured out for you":  
What joy Thy precious words afford  
As we these emblems view!

We will have that privilege tomorrow. Oh, take it up in a godly way! Search your hearts! Paul says to the Corinthians, "But let a man prove himself, and thus eat of the bread, and drink of the cup", 1 Cor 11: 28. What an appeal of love from the heart of Jesus: "I rebuke and discipline as many as I love". His love is behind the pressures of the testimony that come into our pathways. His love is behind it having in view that we should enjoy His love the more. Dear

brethren, let us commit our hearts with unreserved devotion! Let us open the door if He is knocking there. "I rebuke and discipline as many as I love; be zealous therefore and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking; if any one hear my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with me". That is nearness; that is the appeal of love; that is the affectionate way the Lord would come to you. I remember when the Lord stood at my door; I was not so ready to open it. It was not the Lord exactly, and yet it was the Lord: it was a brother, but I said, Yes, I will go out and speak with him. That was a wonderful thing because a little while later I was ready to let Him in, the centre of our hearts. We stand aloof; sometimes we keep a person at arm's length. The Lord would appeal to us to let Him in. Have you been that way, keeping the brethren at arm's length? It sometimes happens in our lives; I am so taken up with my own thoughts; but the Lord in His grace would say, Why? I just want to share My thought with you, My word, My voice. Think of our brother's word last evening: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away", Song of Sol 2: 10. I would say it again tonight: "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away". We can quote what the Lord is saying to us in His appeal of love. He wants us to be with Him.

Then there is the testing; we need to be overcomers. It is lovely to see some of our dear young ones taking a step in overcoming. When a test comes at school you say, No, I will just go home, I will not go there. You do not always have to say everything; just say, 'No' sometimes. It is simple and yet it is difficult. May the Lord help us to be real, be genuine. I think that is what has been before us these days - practice in faithfulness for Christ. "He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne". That is in the glory above. Now you can have the Father and the Son in company with you here, but the Lord in the day to come will give you to sit with Him in His throne, "I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in his throne". The Lord could say, "I have overcome the world " (John 16: 33) in the power that He had, the power through the word of God to meet the enemy and He met it.

You and I need the strengthening power of the Holy Spirit in our appreciation of the Scriptures, the holy word of God, to strengthen our faith to go on in the truth. Then, "He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies". I believe, dear brethren, the Spirit is speaking to the assemblies. Well, may we hear His voice!

But then just another word. This is a solemn word in John 18. We feel it. When the Lord was before the power of the government, Pilate speaking to Him and saying to Him, "Thou art the king of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Dost thou say this of thyself, or have others said it to thee concerning me?" (vv 33,34). It comes down to, what do you say for yourself? What is your understanding?

Have you received the divine communication of the holy word of God? Do you know the Lord Jesus as your Saviour and Lord? Are you prepared to commit yourself to Him, to come into His kingdom and to proclaim Him as your Lord and to submit yourself to Him? Then Pilate said to Him, "Thou art then a king? Jesus answered, Thou sayest it, that I am a king. I have been born for this, and for this I have come into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth". And then this line we have read, "Every one that is of the truth hears my voice". It comes down to the fact, dear brethren, as to whether characteristically we are of the truth. If we are, we will hear His voice. There is a fine word by Mr Taylor on the voice of Christ in John's gospel - (it is in volume 46. The brethren should look at it) the voice of the Bridegroom, the voice of the Son of God, the voice of the Shepherd and then this verse, "Every one that is of the truth hears my voice". I believe, dear brethren, that we are challenged as to whether we are of the truth; and if we are with Christ we will be maintained in the divine pathway to the end. Well, let us be ready to hear His voice, the voice of Jesus, the Son of God. I believe that would be a further appeal to what we had last night - to hear His voice. May the Lord encourage us and strengthen our devotion and committal to Him in these closing moments - days of confusion publicly, the church in ruins - to go on and maintain the divine standard of the truth until the Lord comes.

For His Name's sake.

## **VANCOUVER**

**December 1990**

### **ENQUIRING CHILDREN**

It must be a pleasure to heaven when the young people ask questions in connection with their interest in God's ways. Isaac was only a lad when he enquired of his father where the sheep for the burnt-offering was. He little knew that the fore-knowledge of God had provided a ram, caught in the thicket, in place of himself personally. We now know that all this is a type of the Lord Jesus, giving Himself to be a sweetsmelling sacrifice. The place where this happened was called 'Jehovah will provide'.

The next enquiring child in Scripture is the maiden Miriam, who was anxious about her baby brother. She enquired of Pharaoh's daughter whether she should find a nurse for the little one, as a result of which, in the providence of God, a vital link in His plan for redemption was secured, through Moses.

Later on it was expected that the Hebrew children in Egypt would enquire about God's purpose for His people. For instance, they would see the Passover lamb which had to be sacrificed, the blood for atonement and the flesh to be eaten in the various homes in Egypt. This is another choice type of the Lord Jesus and His sufferings.

Later on still, the children going into the promised land would enquire about the twelve great stones from the bed of the Jordan and placed on the bank of the river. These stones would show that the ark had made it possible for the twelve tribes of Israel to cross the river into Canaan. Do you think about God's purposes for yourself?

**J.C.Evershed**